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CE 640 Ministering with Children Through the Church

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CE 640 - Ministering with Children Through the Church

Examines the needs of children in contemporary society, biblical perspectives on children and how they were to be involved in the faith community, and characteristics of the child's physical, emotional, cognitive, moral, and faith development. Explores the ministries a church can provide to involve children in the faith community, meeting their needs, nurturing wholeness and faith.

Course Objectives

Having completed this course with competence, the student will:

Have a basic understanding of the physical, emotional, cognitive, moral and spiritual development and the needs of children from birth to age 12.

Identify processes and commitments characteristic of ministries designed to involve children in a faith community and nurture them toward wholeness and a maturing faith.

Be able to articulate his/her theology of children's ministries based on Scripture and an understanding of child development.

Be learning from children and through reflecting on personal childhood experiences.

Have grown in ability to:

- a. involve children in meaningful worship.
- b. support children in times of crisis such as divorce, grief, or abuse.
- c. meet the needs of special children such as the gifted, those with handicaps, or latch key children.
- d. examine the issues to consider when deciding on schooling for children.
- e. evaluate programs and resources for their appropriateness to the needs of children and effectiveness in providing processes necessary for faith development.
- f. identify the training needs of lay volunteers ministering to children in the church.

Assignments

Reading

Joining Children on the Spiritual Journey, Catherine Stonehouse
Childhood Education in the Church, Robert E Clark, Joanne Brubaker, Roy B. Zuck 1986 Revised and Expanded ed. -- chapters 1, 5-13, 17-22, 24, 25, 30-32, 34.

Read 200 pages from the chapters listed or skim all the designated material catching the main ideas.

Experiencing the Bible with Children, Dorothy Jean Furnish.

Children in Crisis: A New Commitment, Phyllis Kilbourn, ed.

Select one of the following:

Young Children and Worship, Sonja Stewart and Jerome Berryman

Children in the Worshiping Community, David Ng and Virginia Thomas

The Family Friendly Church, Ben Freudenburg and Rick Lawrence

It Takes a Church Within a Village, H. B. London and Neil Wiseman

Celebrate the Feasts, Martha Zimmermans.

Note the class schedule for dates by which segments of reading should be completed. Hand in a card indicating that you have completed the assigned readings. Cards are due on the following dates:

February 28 - Furnish

March 13 - Stonehouse

March 27 - Clark, Brubaker, Zuck and selected readings.

April 10 - Kilbourn

On the date when you present your book report - Selected readings.

Projects

A. Credit - No Credit Projects

1. Childhood Reflections: Once in each of the first three weeks of the term reflect and journal on your childhood experiences and how they impacted your spiritual development. The following are questions for possible reflection. You may choose others.

What during childhood gave me the most satisfaction --the greatest sense of "specialness" or joy?

What made me uncomfortable or caused pain?

How did my early relationship with my parents impact my self-image and the kind of person I am?

How did my relationship with my parents during childhood shape my image of God?

Who were the persons outside my immediate family who most impacted me during childhood?

What of my experiences in the church were most meaningful and formative? What was most painful and destructive?

What memories do I have of prayer?

Were there times when I felt God's presence?

What do I remember from school experiences with pleasure? with pain?

How did my relationships with other children impact who I am?

Due Dates: February 14, 21, and 28.

2. Observe Children: During the term be open to learn from children. When they are present, listen to them. Observe them in worship.

3. Cooperative Learning Group: With 3 other students form a Cooperative Learning Group. Each group member will select a different book from the “select one” list of the reading assignment. Group members will read their book and share with the group an outline of the book and key concepts from it. Invest a minimum of 3 hours discussing the books. The reading card for your selected book is due the day of your presentation in the group. Your Cooperative Learning Group may choose to also work together on a class presentation.

B. Graded Projects

1. Basic Beliefs Paper on Ministry with Children: Prepare an 8-10 page paper integrating your insights and learnings from several sources and articulating what you believe the church should offer in ministries with children. Prepare for the writing of the paper by doing the following.

a. Interview Children: Interview three children, one from each age group, 4-6, 7-9, and 10-12. In your interview include the following:

- i) Have each child draw you a picture of God (provide the child with paper and markers or crayons.)
- ii) Ask the child to tell you about his or her picture. It would be good to record responses to study later.
- iii) Show the child a page on which you have written a small 7 and a very large 3. Ask the child which number is bigger.
- iv) Tell the child the story of two children, one who broke one glass while climbing up to reach candy he/she had been told not to eat before dinner. The second child, while getting dishes to set the table for his/her mother, knocked ten glasses off the counter and broke all ten glasses. Ask: which child was naughtiest? Why? Which child deserves most punishment? Why?
- v) Ask the child about prayer.
Do you pray?
How do you think God hears your prayers?
- vi) Have each child draw you a picture of something that is special about church.
- vii) Ask the child to tell you about his or her picture.
- viii) Ask: have you every felt God close to you? Can you tell me about that?

b. Reflect on the children’s ministries you have seen: In the light of what you are learning in this course, identify the strengths and weaknesses of the children’s ministries you have seen. If you have had limited experience with children’s ministries you may want to observe a children’s ministry in action. Incorporate your insights from your reflections or observation and analysis into your paper.

c. Write an 8-10 Page Paper: Base the paper on material covered in this course, your interviews, and your reflections on children’s ministries.

- i) Discuss what you are coming to believe that children need for the nurturing of their faith.

- ii) Discuss how findings from your interviews confirmed or differed with material from readings and class presentations (2-3 pages). **(Continued)**
- iii) Given what you have learned about children and ministries with children, what do you believe the church should provide to nurture the faith of children, and how might this be provided (5-8 pages)?
Be sure to document sources from which ideas in the paper are drawn.
Submit pictures with the paper.
Paper is due April 17.

Grading criteria:

- 1. Understanding of children:
 - a. From course material
 - b. From interviews
- 2. Grasp of the essentials for nurturing a child's faith.
- 3. Ability to envision how the church can minister to children.

2. Class Presentation and Paper: With three other students select a topic of interest from the list below. Research the topic and plan a 30 minute workshop on that topic for teachers of children in the church or for parents. Assign each participant a segment of the research and integrate the findings into the presentation.

Present the workshop to the class. The presentation should give classmates significant insight into the topic and use methodology that would effectively communicate with the target audience –making them want to come to the next workshop you offer.

In a 2-3 page paper summarize the research findings that you contributed to the presentation. The paper is **due the day of the presentation.**

Grading criteria

- 1. Significance of content
- 2. Effectiveness of presentation

Presentation Topics

Ministry with children of divorce children	Creative methods for teaching
Children and media	Resources for children's ministries
ADD and ADHD	Involving children in service
After school programs	Intergenerational experiences
Day care	

Final Grade

Grades for the Basic Beliefs paper, and the Class Presentation will be averaged for the final grade. Failure to complete the assigned reading or credit - no credit projects will impact the final grade.

Class attendance is expected.
All papers are to be typed and double spaced.

Sources are to be documented using some approved form.
Inclusive language is to be used when speaking of human beings.
Print SPO number on front of papers
COURSE SCHEDULE

February 7 - Seeing Children Through Jesus' Eyes
Processes for Spiritual Growth

February 14 - Understanding Child Development
Read: Stonehouse chs. 1-5
Clark et. al. chs. 1, 5-10

February 21 - The Child's Relationship with God
Nurture and Evangelism
Read: Stonehouse chs. 6-7
Furnish pp. 1-61

February 28 - Story in the Child's Faith Development
Variations on Tried and True Forms
Read: Furnish pp. 62-137
Clark et. al. chs. 30-32

March 6 - Communicating Theological Concepts to Children
Children in Worship
Read: Stonehouse ch. 8
Clark et. al. chs. 20-22, 24-25

March 13 - Ministries with Families
Read: Stonehouse ch. 9
Clark et. al. ch. 34

March 20 - Classroom Management
Preparing for Adolescence
Read: Clark et. al. chs. 17-19

March 27 - A Place for Children with Special Needs
Working with Gifted Children
Read: Clark et. al. chs. 11-13

April 3 - Reading week

April 10 - Children in Crisis
Ministry with at Risk Children
Read: Kilbourn chs. 1-21

April 17 - Children and Abuse
Ministry with Grieving Children

April 24 - Presentation

May 1 - Presentations

May 8 - Presentations and Wrap Up